

THE GOLDEN STRING. By Bede Griffiths, O.S.B. (Harvill Press; 12s. 6d.)

This is a book of absorbing interest. Starting from a moment, in boyhood, of natural-mystical vision, it describes the author's long and often painful journey, first away from organized religion (but away also from the unnaturalness of industrial-technological civilization) and then gradually to the discovery of Catholicism and finally of the monastic life. The author tells us of the influences which helped to form his outlook: poets, philosophers ancient and modern, Anglican divines, the wisdom of the East; and of how he discovered the greatness of the Middle Ages, in the sphere of thought as well as of art, and so, through Dante and St Thomas, came to the understanding of the Church and finally found that monasticism was not, as he had supposed, something to be read about in history books but a living reality and the way of life for which in fact he had all the time been searching. One of the most interesting sections of the book deals with his experiments in living the 'simple life', first with two friends and later on alone. This is a book which cannot but be of value to any reader, Catholic and non-Catholic alike.

G.V.

THREE MEN. By Jean Evans. (Gollancz; 15s.)

The case-histories which the psychologists provide have become an important part of the mythology of our time, and their influence in a Kinsey-ridden America must be supposed to be considerable. Miss Evans' three studies in 'the biography of emotion' are however far more valuable than the statistically-butressed evidence for the abnormal which so often allows the lubricious to be acceptable under the name of science. She is concerned with persons and not with cases, and, although her three men are psychologically ill, she never allows them to be swamped by theory or to lose their individual worth. Johnny Rocco, William Miller and Martin Beardson in their different ways—the Catholic dead-end kid at war with the world, the vagabond crook who becomes blind and is extraordinarily cured, the homosexual with conflicts too fearful for his own resolution—reflect a society, or some aspects of it, in which the individual is tragically at a loss. Miss Evans has the perception of a novelist, though she never seems to exaggerate the meaning of her material, and *Three Men* is a cautionary tale of what can happen when material values dominate a society and the person gets lost in a labyrinth too huge and too cruel for his assimilation. In particular, the religious implications of Johnny Rocco's story should be taken to heart by those whose responsibility he is (and he stands for many thousands more).

I.E.